United Nations S/PRST/2018/15

Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 8315th meeting of the Security Council, held on 23 July 2018, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Afghanistan", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council notes the conclusion of the voter registration process in Afghanistan on July 18, which according to preliminary data of the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan saw more than 8.9 million Afghans register, including more than 3 million women, in order to exercise their democratic right to vote at the upcoming parliamentary and district council elections on 20 October 2018 and in the 2019 presidential elections.

"The Security Council recalls that the Afghan Government, political leaders, and the Independent Electoral Commission and Electoral Complaints Commission carry the primary responsibility to create the necessary conditions for credible elections to take place.

"The Security Council emphasizes the need to address remaining challenges and to accelerate progress in electoral preparations, which requires without further delay the completion of outstanding issues, including the approval of candidates to fill critical vacancies within the Independent Election Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission, the establishment of a central database of all registered voters that identifies irregularities, as well as the publication of a final list of candidates.

"The Security Council underscores the importance of developing sustainable democratic institutions in Afghanistan based on inclusive, transparent and credible elections, and stresses the need to promote the full and safe participation of women as well as members of minority groups, including ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, both as voters and candidates.

"The Security Council reaffirms its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan and in this regard underscores its support to the Afghan electoral process as a fully Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process.

"The Security Council calls on all parties concerned to adhere to the fundamental requirements laid out by the electoral law and all other relevant regulations and to uphold the highest standards of integrity throughout this important and historic process, so that the final outcome reflects the will of the people of Afghanistan.

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"The Security Council emphasizes the central role of UNAMA, in cooperation with the wider UN system, and in close consultation and coordination with the Government of Afghanistan, in supporting the organization of elections and the strengthening of electoral reform efforts by providing technical assistance and capacity-building and by coordinating international assistance efforts.

"The Security Council stresses the importance of addressing sexual- and gender-based violence against female voters and candidates.

"The Security Council stresses the importance of a secure environment for conducting elections, condemns in the strongest terms those who resort to violence to obstruct the electoral process, including the Taliban and ISIL (Da'esh) affiliates, and commends the resiliency, progress, and exceptional courage displayed by the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces in their leading role in securing their country.

"The Security Council welcomes the commitment by civil society to conduct observation at every polling station to monitor voting, counting, tabulating, and transmission of results.

"The Security Council emphasizes the need for appropriate electoral observation missions to be in place, and welcomes the intention of international partners to provide support at the request of the Afghan Government, and calls on all parties to facilitate and respect the observers' work.

"The Security Council reaffirms its commitment to the ability of all Afghan citizens throughout Afghanistan to exercise their civil and political rights, and reiterates its continued support for the Afghan Government and people of Afghanistan in their pursuit of democratic development, prosperity and durable peace.

"The Security Council expresses the intention to continue to closely follow the electoral process, including progress on the electoral preparations, and in this regard looks forward to the thorough verification of registered voters following the completion of the registration process, and requests UNAMA to provide an update to council members on key developments and progress regarding electoral preparations within one month of the adoption of this statement."

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Security Council

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10 August 2018

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 8327th meeting of the Security Council, held on 10 August 2018, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Peace consolidation in West Africa", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the briefing on 17 July 2018 by the Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas.

"The Security Council recalls its resolutions 2423 (2018), 2391 (2017), 2359 (2017), 2349 (2017) and 2320 (2016), as well as its presidential statements S/PRST/2017/2, S/PRST/2017/10 and S/PRST/2018/3.

"The Security Council expresses full support to the Special Representative, in carrying out his mandate, and ongoing activities undertaken by UNOWAS. The Security Council notes the increased demands on UNOWAS and continues to underline the need for sustained support and adequate resources in this regard. The Security Council encourages further cooperation, mutual prioritization and a clear division of tasks among various UN offices, agencies and departments, in particular UNOWAS and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), in addressing conflict prevention and sustaining peace in West Africa and the Sahel.

"The Security Council reiterates its recognition of the role of UNOWAS in contributing to continuous strategic and integrated analysis of the opportunities, risks and challenges in support of efforts by national and local actors to sustain peace, looks forward to efforts to enhance ongoing activities undertaken by UNOWAS in the area of conflict prevention, including the development of comprehensive early warning analyses, mediation and good offices, and efforts to enhance subregional capacities to cooperate in this regard, in particular the joint African Union (AU), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) cooperation on early warning systems.

"The Security Council reiterates its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of all countries in West Africa and the Sahel.

"The Security Council emphasizes the need for national stakeholders to work together to facilitate the timely preparation for, and holding of, peaceful,

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transparent and credible elections, and urges them to ensure a level playing field for all candidates and to work towards increased participation of women, including with a view to increase the number of women appointed to senior government positions, in accordance with their respective constitutions and national, regional and global commitments.

"The Security Council welcomes continued regional efforts to assist national stakeholders in Togo in to overcome their differences peacefully through dialogue and in line with the democratic aspirations of the Togolese people.

"The Security Council calls upon all political stakeholders in Guinea Bissau to uphold the provisions of the Conakry Accords and to complete its implementation without further delay, emphasizes the importance of the organization of inclusive, free, fair, transparent and credible legislative elections in Guinea-Bissau scheduled for November 2018 and reiterates the important role of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) in this regard.

"The Security Council welcomes continued international engagement to support the authorities and people of the Gambia in their efforts towards consolidating peace, carrying out political reforms, participating in the security sector reform and transitional justice processes, supporting the implementation of the National Development Plan and regional integration in West Africa.

"The Security Council encourages the consolidation of ongoing political reforms in the region to prevent violence and instability, as well as progress in the area of national reconciliation, in particular in the Mano River Basin region and in other countries that have recently undergone democratic transitions, and further welcomes the closure of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the peaceful transition in Liberia. The Security Council underlines the need for the United Nations to sustain support in this regard including in non-mission settings, and further emphasizes the importance of the convening role of the Peacebuilding Commission in sustaining peace and peacebuilding efforts.

"The Security Council emphasizes the important role of women in prevention and resolution of conflicts, in peacebuilding as well as in post-conflict situations, as recognized in relevant Security Council resolutions including resolution 1325 (2000) and resolution 2242 (2015).

"The Security Council welcomes the recent high-level UN-AU mission to the Sahel and emphasizes the need for an integrated gender perspective in the design and implementation of comprehensive strategies to address the root causes of the crisis. The Security Council welcomes efforts by UNOWAS and ECOWAS to work towards the systematic involvement of women in initiatives to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism, as and when conducive to terrorism, and further requests that these issues continue to be integrated into regular reporting by UNOWAS.

"The Security Council reiterates its serious concern over the challenging security situation in West Africa and the Sahel, notably threats posed by terrorism, maritime piracy, conflicts between pastoralists and farmers, and transnational organized crime, including trafficking in persons, arms and drugs and illegal exploitation of natural resources, which can be interlinked, and welcomes UNOWAS efforts to support regional analysis and early warning mechanisms. The Security Council further welcomes the successful holding of the Joint Summit of ECOWAS and ECCAS on Peace, Security, Stability and the Fight against Terrorism and Violent Extremism held in Lomé, Togo, on 30 July,

as well as the commitment of their Member States to strengthen cooperation on key peace and security challenges.

"The Security Council welcomes the leadership demonstrated by countries in West Africa and the Sahel in spearheading initiatives to address security challenges in the region and commends the efforts of the African Union and ECOWAS, as well as of Member States of West Africa and the Sahel, to strengthen security in border regions and regional cooperation, as well as to address the impact of terrorism and transnational organized crime, including through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (FC-G5S). The Security Council reaffirms that Member States must ensure that any measures taken to counter terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law, and in this regard encourages UNOWAS to strengthen its support towards greater effectiveness and accountability in security sector governance and reform efforts in the region. The Security Council underlines the need for security efforts to be aligned with political objectives, to enable the restoration of civilian security, the establishment of effective governance to deliver essential services, and the revival of local economics to provide livelihood opportunities for surging youth populations. The Security Council encourages ECOWAS and the G5 Sahel to identify areas of complementarity in preventing conflict and sustaining peace in the region, and further recalls the important role of UNOWAS in providing technical assistance to the Permanent Secretariat of the G5 Sahel.

"The Security Council expresses its concern for increased tensions between pastoralists and farmers in the region driven by competition for natural resources, rapid population growth, weak governance, pressures related to climate and ecological factors, and the circulation of small arms and light weapons, and encourages ECOWAS and its Member States, with the support of UNOWAS, to address these challenges in a coordinated and holistic manner. The Security Council further expresses its deep concern about the intensification of intercommunal violence in Central Mali and underlines that stabilization of the situation in this region requires a fully integrated response encompassing simultaneous pursuit of progress on security, governance, development, reconciliation, as well as protection and promotion of human rights.

"The Security Council recalls that the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons continue to pose threats to international peace and security, cause significant loss of lives, and contribute to instability and security in many regions, including in West Africa and the Sahel.

"The Security Council reaffirms its condemnation in the strongest terms of all instances of trafficking in persons, including for the purpose of forced labour and slavery, in areas affected by armed conflict, which undermine the rule of law, contribute to other forms of transnational organized crime and may exacerbate conflict, insecurity and instability and undermine development. The Security Council reiterates the need to ensure organization and coherence in the efforts of the United Nations System to address trafficking in persons in areas affected by armed conflict or in post-conflict situations, and further recognizes the need to continue to work towards an enhanced, comprehensive and coordinated approach. The Security Council encourages further cooperation between the EU, AU and UN, in particular within the joint Task Force, aimed at saving and protecting lives of migrants and refugees along routes, and in particular inside Libya.

"The Security Council expresses concern over the overall humanitarian situation in the region, characterized by the impact of armed conflict and terrorism, extreme poverty, food insecurity, including conflict-induced hunger and threat of famine, forced displacement, human rights violations and abuses, sexual and gender-based violence, adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes, natural disasters and epidemics, which contribute to the high levels of structural, chronic and acute vulnerability in the region and continue to affect populations, and call for significant humanitarian and development action as well as the disbursement of previously pledged funds. The Security Council welcomes efforts of the Governments in the Lake Chad Basin Region and regional and sub-regional organizations to prevent further deterioration of the humanitarian crisis, while recognizing the need for enhanced national efforts to address the vast humanitarian needs.

"The Security Council recognizes the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters among other factors on the stability of West Africa and the Sahel region, including through drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity, continues to stress the need for long-term strategies by governments and the United Nations, based on risk assessments, to support stabilization and build resilience, and further requests that such information be taken into consideration by UNOWAS in its activities.

"The Security Council stresses the need for strengthening collective engagement across the Sahel region, in line with existing frameworks, and in this regard welcomes the strengthened cooperation between the UN and the AU, in particular through the Joint UN-AU Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, and takes note of the decision of the AU Peace and Security Council to reactivate the Nouakchott Process and the review of the AU Strategy for the Sahel.

"The Security Council underlines the need for a more integrated, cross-pillar approach across the development, humanitarian, and peace and security nexus, including to address root causes of crises, prevent further tensions and violence, tackle exclusion and poverty, strengthen resilience of institutions and communities, promote good governance and build peaceful, just and inclusive societies. The Security Council welcomes the collective United Nations efforts, under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General, towards recalibrating the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) to expedite its impact, in line with the needs of the Sahelian people and national and regional priorities, and in close collaboration with partners and countries of the region. The Security Council welcomes the appointment of the Secretary-General's Special Adviser for the Sahel and encourages efforts to foster greater coherence and coordination within the UN System as well as with partners in the region through the efficient implementation of the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel, in coordination with the Special Representative and UNOWAS.

"The Security Council calls upon Member States and other actors to align their activities under the UNISS and join efforts in mobilizing the necessary resources to this end, and further requests the Secretary-General to keep it informed of the progress towards the implementation of the UN Support Plan for the Sahel in the next report on UNOWAS.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide information on UNOWAS efforts with respect to aspects highlighted in this statement, and reiterates its call for an assessment of the implementation of its resolution 2349 to be integrated into regular reporting by UNOWAS."

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Security Council

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10 August 2018

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 8328th meeting of the Security Council, held on 10 August 2018, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Central African region", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) (S/2018/521) and welcomes the briefing on 13 June 2018 by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA, Mr Francois Louncény Fall.

"The Security Council recalls its resolutions 2349 (2017) and 2387 (2017), as well as its presidential statements S/PRST/2015/12 and S/PRST/2018/14.

"The Security Council recalls the important work of the Special Representative and UNOCA carried out over the past three years as set out in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2018/521). In particular, the Security Council acknowledges UNOCA's role in promoting inclusive political dialogue in Chad, Cameroon, Gabon, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Sao Tome and Principe, in encouraging stability in the region, and in preventing or mitigating election-related crises.

"The Security Council remains deeply concerned at the grave security situation and related violations and abuses of human rights in parts of Central Africa, in particular the continuing terrorist activities of Boko Haram and other terrorist groups in the Lake Chad Basin, the persistent violence perpetrated by armed groups in the Central African Republic (CAR), the ongoing violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the worrying increase in violence in the north-west and south-west regions of Cameroon. The Council expresses its continuing concern regarding maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, the illegal wildlife trade and transnational organised crime, including the threat of mercenary activities. The Security Council expresses its ongoing concern at continuing tensions linked to disputed electoral processes, social and economic difficulties, and conflicts between farmers and herders.

"The Security Council welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Central Africa and the activities of UNOCA dated 7 June 2018. In particular, the Council notes the recommendation that the mandate of UNOCA be extended for another three years, from 1 September 2018 to 31 August 2021. The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to conduct a strategic review regarding the scope of UNOCA's mandate and activities and present

recommendations for areas of improvement, including the coherence of UN activities in countries under UNOCA's mandate, or new or refocused priorities, to the Security Council by 1 August 2019. The Security Council expresses its intention to consider these recommendations, including any proposed changes to the mandate, by 31 August 2019.

"The Security Council notes that UNOCA's priorities will include: to perform good offices on behalf of the Secretary-General; to assist the countries of the sub-region in consolidating peace and resolving tensions from the various elections that took place in the period from 2015–2018, and to assist countries facing institutional crises related to electoral processes; to work with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and its member states to lay the groundwork for the structural prevention of election-related violence; to enhance the capacities of the ECCAS secretariat in conflict prevention, early warning, women peace and security, mediation and other areas, including through continuing to conduct joint assessments and visits with ECCAS; and to work closely with UNOWAS to address transregional issues such as maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, conflict between farmers and herders, and combatting Boko Haram.

"The Security Council encourages further cooperation, mutual prioritisation and clear division of tasks between UNOCA and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), and other United Nations missions in the region, the Special Envoy for the Great Lakes and the Special Envoy on the situation in Burundi, in order to avoid duplication and ensure a coherent and streamlined approach to United Nations activity in the region, and with a view to strengthening regional and sub-regional organisations to address cross-border threats, and commends the engagement of UNOCA with, and assistance to, subregional and regional organisations in order to promote peace and stability in Central Africa.

"The Security Council emphasises the important role of women in prevention, mediation and resolution of conflicts, in peacebuilding and in post-conflict situations, as recognised in relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolution 1325 (2000) and resolution 2242 (2015), and encourages UNOCA to take fully into account gender considerations as a cross-cutting issue in its activities and to continue to support ECCAS in its adoption and implementation of the Regional Action Plan for implementation of resolution 1325 (2000).

"The Security Council recognises the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters among other factors on the stability of the Central Africa Region, including through drought, desertification, land degradation, and food insecurity, continues to stress the need for long-term strategies by governments and the United Nations, based on risk assessments, to support stabilisation and build resilience, and further requests that such information be taken into consideration by UNOCA in its activities.

"The Security Council expresses its deep concern regarding the persistent violence perpetrated by armed groups in the CAR, against civilians, United Nations peacekeepers, and humanitarian workers, and at violations of international humanitarian law and abuses and violations of human rights, including those committed against children and those involving sexual and gender-based violence in conflict. The Security Council also strongly condemns the rise of incitement to ethnic and religious hatred and violence as well as

manipulated hostility towards MINUSCA and other international actors. The Security Council urges armed groups to cease all forms of violence and destabilising activities, lay down their arms immediately and unconditionally, and engage constructively in the peace process. The Security Council reiterates its demand that all parties allow and facilitate the full, safe, immediate and unhindered access for the timely delivery of humanitarian assistance to populations in need. The Security Council further reiterates the urgent and imperative need to hold accountable those responsible for violations of international humanitarian law and violations and abuses of human rights.

"The Council encourages SRSG Fall and UNOCA to continue to support MINUSCA, and increase regional efforts to advance the peace and reconciliation process in the CAR through the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and its road map that was adopted in Libreville on 17 July 2017, which both constitute the main framework for a political solution in the CAR.

"The Security Council remains concerned at the security and humanitarian situation in the Lake Chad Basin region. The Security Council strongly condemns all terrorist attacks carried out in the region, including those perpetrated by Boko Haram and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL, also known as Da'esh). These attacks have caused large-scale and devastating loss of life, have had a devastating humanitarian impact including through the displacement of a large number of civilians in Nigeria, Cameroon and Chad, and represent a threat to the stability and peace of West and Central Africa. The Council notes with particular concern the continuing use by Boko Haram of women and girls as suicide bombers, which has created an atmosphere of suspicion towards them and made them targets of harassment and stigmatisation in affected communities, and of arbitrary arrests by security forces. The Council emphasises the need for affected States to counter terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including by addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, in accordance with obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law.

"The Security Council welcomes the support provided by UNOCA and UNOWAS for the development of a joint regional strategy to address the root causes of the Lake Chad Basin crisis through regular contact with regional leaders. The Security Council encourages partners to increase security assistance to Lake Chad Basin Commission countries, and humanitarian and development support across the region for those affected by Boko Haram activities.

"The Security Council expresses its concern that the Lords' Resistance Army (LRA) continues to pose a security risk to civilians, particularly in CAR and DRC, and notes the importance of continued regional and international support for the African Union Regional Task Force's operations, in particular in supporting repatriation, rehabilitation and stabilisation initiatives.

"The Security Council takes note of planned elections across the region in the upcoming period of UNOCA's mandate and emphasises the need for national stakeholders to work together to facilitate the timely preparation for, and the holding of, peaceful, transparent and credible elections. It urges them to ensure a level playing field for all candidates and to support the full, equal and effective participation of women, including with a view to increasing the number of women appointed to senior government positions, in accordance with their respective constitutions and national, regional and global commitments,

and in line with resolution 1325 (2000). The Security Council welcomes UNOCA's ongoing support to States of the region in this regard.

"The Security Council expresses its concern at the link between illicit trafficking in wildlife and natural resources and financing of armed groups in the subregion, including the LRA and Boko Haram, and, in this regard, encourages UNOCA to continue to support the development of a coherent and concerted subregional approach to address this disturbing phenomenon.

"The Security Council recalls that the illicit transfer, destabilising accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition continue to pose threats to international peace and security, cause significant loss of life and contribute to instability and security in Central Africa, and, in this regard, encourages UNOCA to continue to contribute, in its capacity as the Secretariat for the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, to countering this threat and calls for sustainable assistance by international and bilateral donors. The Security Council commends UNOCA's support for regional anti-piracy efforts, in cooperation with UNOWAS, the member States of ECCAS, ECOWAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission, to address maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea. The Council encourages UNOCA to continue to work with UNOWAS, ECCAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission to support the full operationalisation of the Yaoundé process architecture for safety and security in the Gulf of Guinea, particularly the Interregional Coordination Centre.

"The Security Council expresses its concern about the threat of mercenary activities in the region linked to transnational organised crime and encourages UNOCA to support ECCAS in the development of its subregional strategy to fight such activities which include trafficking in persons, arms, drugs and natural resources, and the smuggling of migrants.

"The Security Council expresses grave concern at the devastating humanitarian consequences of ongoing violence and conflict in the region, including food insecurity, health emergencies and the threat of epidemics, sexual and gender-based violence, and increased numbers of internally displaced persons and refugees. The Security Council expresses its concern that violence and insecurity hinders an effective humanitarian response, and recalls its intention to mandate United Nations peacekeeping and other relevant missions, where appropriate, to assist in creating conditions conducive to safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian assistance. The Security Council calls upon international donors to make up funding shortfalls for humanitarian operations.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to provide a written report to it on the situation in Central Africa and UNOCA's activities, including on the situation in the Lake Chad region as requested in resolution 2349 (2017), by 30 November 2018 and every six months thereafter."